

# California Citrus State Historic Park



## Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

GRAY DAVIS  
Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS  
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN  
Acting Director, California State Parks



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

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800-777-0369  
**P. O. Box 942896** 916-653-6995, outside the U.S.  
**Sacramento, CA** 711, TTY relay service  
94296-0001

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**California Citrus  
State Historic Park  
1879 Jackson Street  
Riverside, California 92504  
(909) 780-6222**

*Grassy, tree-shaded areas  
evoke a quieter time,  
an era when the American  
dream might be found in a  
leafy, evergreen grove  
heavy with golden fruit.*



## Visitors to California Citrus State

**Historic Park** are greeted at the park entrance by a replica of an old-fashioned roadside fruit stand. This charming “big orange” structure on the corner of Van Buren Boulevard and Dufferin Avenue in Riverside recalls an era in agriculture that forever changed the landscape of Southern California. The park dedicates nearly half of its 377 acres to what was once the universal symbol of California’s role in agriculture—the citrus groves.

Of all the crops that constitute California’s agricultural legacy, oranges in particular once conjured an image of romance, prosperity and abundance. Warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters

provide perfect growing conditions, and between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, the groves spread across Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles and Ventura counties, and California’s central valley. The expansion sparked a second California “gold rush” and innovative methods of irrigation, fruit processing, advertising, cooperative marketing by growers, and railroad transportation, all of which helped to establish California’s image as the land of sunshine and opportunity.



*Orange stand, Van Buren Blvd. and Dufferin Ave.*

## NATIVE PEOPLE

The area that is now Riverside County was inhabited for centuries by diverse native peoples, including Serrano, Luiseño, Gabrielino, Cupeño, Chemehuevi and Cahuilla. Villages consisted of a few extended families and moved seasonally following the availability of food resources. Creeks, as well as hunting and food gathering areas, were “owned” by the entire village.

Utensils, tools, and hunting and food preparing equipment were considered personal property. The land provided acorns, seeds, nuts, grasses and fruits for food. Game included deer, quail, rabbits, lizards and other reptiles. Native Americans—primarily Cahuilla—were the first labor force in the citrus groves and helped construct the early

waterworks. However, only small numbers of native people were available for such work, and this, combined with the prejudice they encountered, eventually led to a decline in their presence in the citrus industry.

## CREATING THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

The mission padres planted the first Mediterranean citrus varieties on the grounds of Mission San Gabriel around 1803. William Wolfskill, a trapper from Kentucky, developed more acreage from seedlings he obtained in 1841. In the mid-to-late years of

the 1800s, lemon, lime and orange trees thrived in what is now downtown Los Angeles. However, it was the Bahia, or Washington navel orange, a seedless orange native to

Brazil, that was to revolutionize the industry. In 1873 Mrs. Eliza Tibbets of Riverside obtained two of these young trees from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. They matured to produce fruit far superior to earlier varieties—it was sweeter and more flavorful, had no seeds, and its thick, easily-peeled skin protected it during shipping. Today nearly all of the Washington navel orange trees grown in California are descended from these two original trees, one of which still grows at the intersection of Arlington and Magnolia Avenues in Riverside.



*Harvesting oranges, circa 1900*

## THE WORKFORCE

Native Americans were replaced in the late 1800s by Chinese workers brought to Riverside by Chinese labor contractors. By 1885 nearly 80 percent of the labor force was Chinese. The considerable horticultural skills and knowledge that they brought with them made citriculture enormously successful. However, a climate of anti-Chinese sentiment, as well as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, caused their numbers to dwindle.

With fewer Chinese available, Japanese immigrants moved in to fill the need. By 1900 the citrus industry in Riverside alone employed about 3,000 Japanese workers, hired through Japanese labor contractors. Between 1900 and 1920 they were the largest labor group in the citrus industry. However, anti-immigrant sentiment eventually drove them out.



*Packing House, circa 1900*



*Packing House*

Around 1919 Hispanic workers began to arrive, along with other immigrant nationalities. They came with their families and formed communities wherever they worked. By the mid-1940s, they constituted approximately two-thirds of the citrus industry's labor force. Women were the mainstay in the packing houses.



*Restoring a citrus landscape*

## IRRIGATION— THE GAGE CANAL

Lured by land promoters and Southern California railroads, the dreams of large and small investors took root in the California soil. Riverside, a pioneer agricultural settlement, was established in 1870 by the Southern California Colony

Association. To quell conflicts over water, the newly formed Riverside Water Company began an irrigation canal between the Santa Ana River and Riverside. In order to gain title to 640 acres on which he had filed a claim, Canadian jeweler Matthew Gage was given three years to bring water to the land. Between



*The Gage Canal*

1885 and 1889, he built a canal 11.91 miles long from the Santa Ana River in San Bernardino and later extended it an additional 8.22 miles. The flume of the original canal—later replaced by the Mockingbird Canyon

Dam—crossed Mockingbird Canyon. The canal doubled the citrus producing area of Riverside and still supplies water to local citrus ranches and the groves of California Citrus State Historic Park.

Between 1891 and 1893, growers united to form cooperative organizations for marketing citrus. By 1908 a partnership between

the California Fruit Growers Exchange (later Sunkist) and the Southern Pacific Railroad launched advertising campaigns to promote the sale of citrus in the Midwest and Eastern U.S. markets.

Among the most enduring creations of the citrus industry were crate labels. Though packing companies introduced the labels



*Artistic crate label*

to identify their particular products, buyers soon began ordering fruit by specific labels. The labels became more and more ornate—reaching their peak between 1900 and 1930—and were designed by some of the era’s best artists. Today these works are collectible, garnering top dollar for rare originals in prime condition.

### **TODAY AND BEYOND**

California Citrus State Historic Park opened in August 1993 as a living historical museum reflecting the citrus industry heritage. The 186 acres of citrus groves

managed by the California Citrus Non-Profit Management Corporation produce navel and Valencia oranges, grapefruit and lemons. Revenues generated under a nonprofit management agreement help fund new facilities and programs, and maintain the citrus groves in the park. The income-producing groves also provide a backdrop for the palm tree-lined trails, walkways, entry way and picnic areas. The Visitor Center has exhibits on the significance of the industry as well as a gift shop. The Varietal Grove features at least 75 varieties of citrus. Guided tours are offered at 10:00 a.m. on Saturdays, and

visitors may take self-guided tours daily. Call the park to schedule guided school or group tours.

This “park within a park” reflects building design and landscaping of the early 1900s, with Craftsman/California Bungalow-style structures.

Grassy, tree-shaded areas evoke a quieter time, an era when the American Dream might be found in a leafy, evergreen grove heavy with golden fruit. Future re-creation of the key components

of a complete citrus producing community circa 1880-1935 will include:

- an operating packing shed
- a laborers’ camp
- a wealthy grower’s home serving as a restaurant, conference area and interpretive exhibit
- an early citrus settlement with water and land offices, a boarding house and a citrus pavilion
- a pedestrian “water flume” bridge



*Orange “sizer” public and school tours*



### **NATURAL FEATURES**

The terrain is somewhat hilly, with elevations ranging from 920 to 1,060 feet above sea level. The Mockingbird Canyon arroyo—a drainage tributary to the Santa Ana River—bisects the park, abutting foothills to the south. Approximately one-third of the park remains unchanged by the citrus industry. The most common native growth along the river bottom wash of Mockingbird Canyon is willows and mule fat. Non-native plant species such as eucalyptus and giant reed also exist here. Typical species in the upland portions of the canyon include California sagebrush, several species of buckwheat, blue elderberry, miner’s lettuce, nightshade and desert thorn.



*Visitor Center*



*Red-tailed hawk*

### WILDLIFE

Though the natural ecosystem has been affected by the citrus industry, the reservoir and year-round irrigation water attract waterfowl and other species that would normally only visit

seasonally. The dry wash area of Mockingbird Canyon shelters brush rabbits, California ground squirrels and bobcats. Raccoons, striped skunks, kangaroo rats and coyotes are also found here. Red-tailed hawks, California quail, hummingbirds and roadrunners are common.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- The Sunkist Center, set in citrus groves and rose gardens next to a courtyard and gazebo, is available for weddings, reunions, special events and meetings. Call the park for details.
- The group picnic area typifies the look and ambience of the pre-World War II period—peaceful, natural, and conducive to family picnicking and strolling under the



*Gazebo and rose garden*

trees. An outdoor amphitheater and interpretive gazebo provide a backdrop for open-air presentations and a summer concert series. Call the park for reservations, availability and fee information.

### ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

- The Sunkist Center building and its restrooms, a pay telephone, benches and drinking fountain at the adjoining gazebo (approaches may require some assistance)
- The restroom and drinking fountains in the picnic area
- The drinking fountain and the stage area in the interpretive gazebo/amphitheater
- Decomposed granite walkways—some routes between points are from 200 to 400 feet long

Accessibility is continually improving. Call the park for the latest information.

### NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Chino Hills State Park, 4½ miles north of junction of Highways 71 and 91 (909) 780-6222
- Lake Perris State Recreation Area, 11 miles south of Riverside (909) 940-5603/5608



*Miss California and Iowa Boy statue*

### PLEASE REMEMBER

- Park hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in winter and 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in summer.
- Alcohol is not allowed in the park except by special event permit only.
- All features of the park are protected by law. Visitors may sample citrus fruit only on interpretive tours.
- Stay on designated trails and paths at all times.
- Dogs must be on a leash no longer than six feet and must be under control at all times.

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact:

California Citrus State Historic Park  
Non-Profit Management Corporation  
P.O. Box 21292 • Riverside, CA 92516

# California Citrus State Historic Park



Cleveland St

Park  
Entrance

DUFFERIN AVE

to Highway 91

Giant Orange  
Fruit Stand

WORKING  
CITRUS  
GROVES

Kiosk  
Station

Grower's  
House

CITRUS  
GROVES

Sunkist  
Center

Gazebo

OPEN  
GRASS  
AREA

Varietal  
Grove

Interprete  
Gazebo/  
Amphitheater

CITRUS  
GROVES

WORKING  
CITRUS  
GROVES

P

P

P

P

Not accessible

Not accessible

Knoll Trail

960

960

980

960

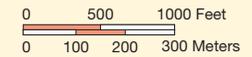
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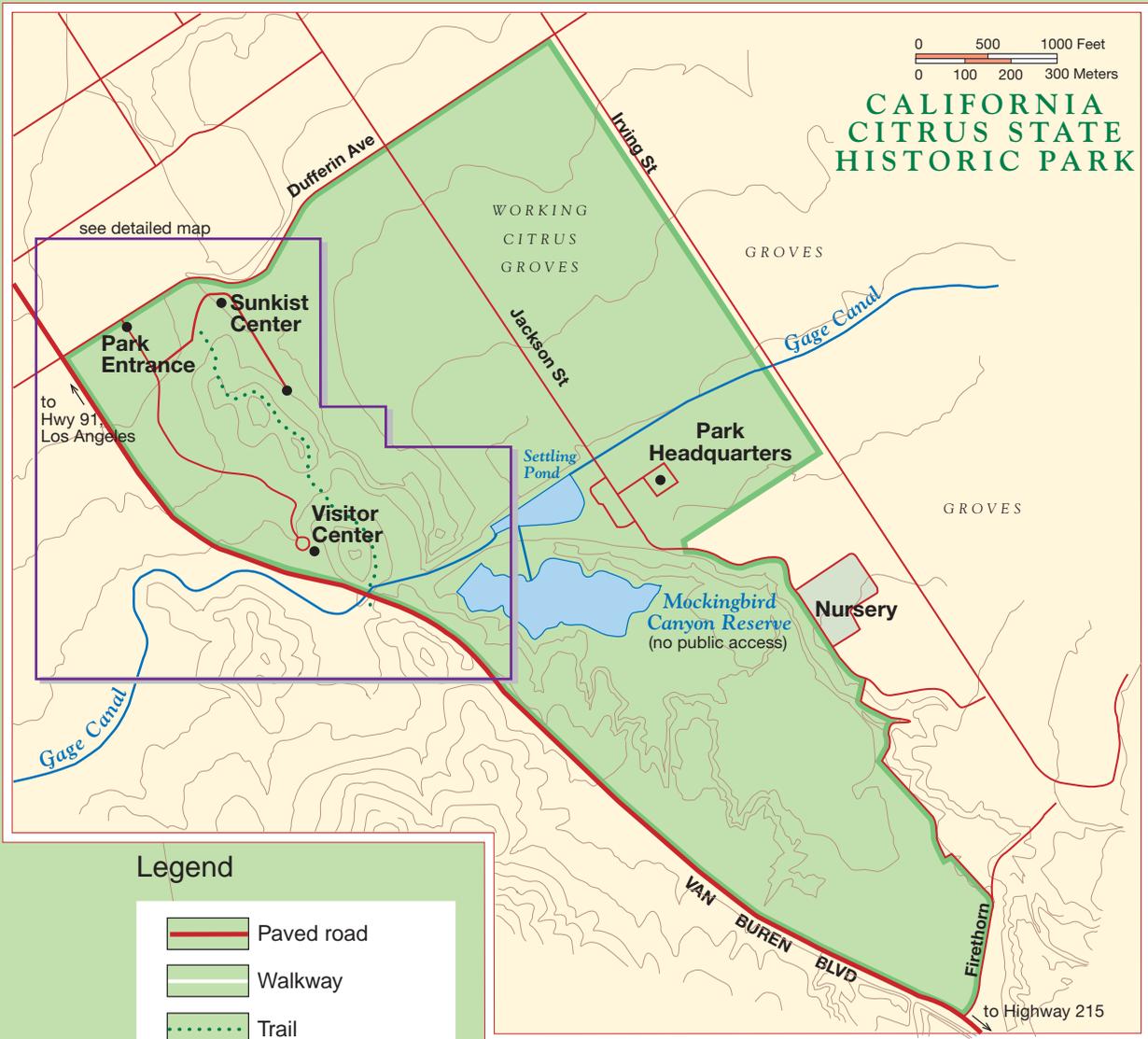




to Park Headquarters



# CALIFORNIA CITRUS STATE HISTORIC PARK



## Legend

- Paved road
- Walkway
- Trail
- Accessible Feature
- Exhibits
- Gate
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Group Picnic Area
- Telephone
- Restrooms
- Viewpoint

WORKING  
CITRUS  
GROVES

WORKING  
CITRUS  
GROVES

GROVES

ARROYO

OPEN  
GRASS  
AREA

S  
S

TERRACED  
CITRUS KNOLLS  
with  
PALM-LINED  
TRAILS

WORKING  
CITRUS  
GROVES

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# IA CITRUS STATE HISTORIC PARK

